THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) It has been decided in principle to amend the Foreigners Act, 1946 in order to enhance the existing penalty for violation of the provisions of the Act from the existing five years imprisonment to eight years imprisonment. The enhancement of punishment will have deterrent effect. With this amendment, it will be difficult for the offenders to obtain bail easily as a notice will have to be given to the State/Public Prosecutor by the Courts before granting bail to the accused since the offences will be triable by the Court of Sessions. As regards action against the persons engaged in organized crimes other than under the Foreigners Act, action is taken under the substantial laws by the concerned authorities.

Pakistan's suspension from commonwealth

3024. SHRI K.B. KRISHNAMURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India had played an active and leading role at the recently held Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference in London to thwart the attempt of Pakistani lobby for revoking Pakistan's suspension after the formation of a new Government in Islamabad;

(b) whether India pleaded for continuation of the suspension till full restoration of democratic process in Pakistan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) met in London from 31st—1st November, 2002 to decide whether the recent developments in Pakistan merited reversal of earlier CMAG decision to suspend Pakistan from the Councils of the Commonwealth. Participants took into account the report of the Commonwealth and EU Observer Groups on this issue as well as the constitutional and other changes introduced in Pakistan before the elections which had moved Pakistan towards institutionalised military rule. EAM also strongly articulated India's concerns on this issue. The Group decided by consensus to maintain the *status-quo* on Pakistan's suspension from the Councils of the Commonwealth pending greater clarity and the assessment of the role and function of democratic institutions.